

REMARKS

Claims 13-30 are now pending and stand finally rejected in the application. With this reply, claim 13 is amended. Upon entry of the amendment, claims 13-30 remain pending.

Support for the amendment to claim 13 finds support in the specification as originally filed, for example, in paragraph [0026]. Because the amendment introduces no new matter, and because as discussed below the amendment puts the claims in an allowable condition, Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendment after the Final Rejection.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE FINAL REJECTION

Applicants thank the Examiner for the detailed action mailed February 26, 2007, and for the clear exposition of the position of the Office with response to arguments made by Applicants in previous prosecution. As indicated in § 9 of the Final Rejection, many of the rejections can be dealt with by specifying or clarifying that the A-B composite and the A-B-A composite materials claim contain two layers or three layers, respectively. Specifically, it is believed that such an amendment or a clarification would overcome the § 102 type rejections in view of the Krueger reference, the Ohya reference, and the Katsuki reference.

As to rejections of the Korpman reference, § 9 of the Office Action acknowledges Applicant's argument that the readily removable expendable layer described in the specification at paragraph [0032] and that is the subject of independent claims 13 and 22, is not disclosed in the reference. However, the Final Rejection maintains the

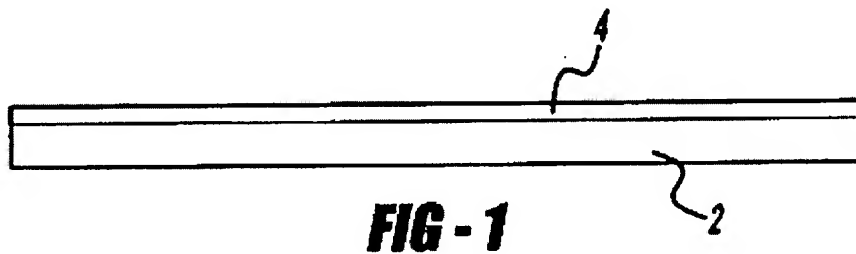
position that the arguments are not commensurate in scope with the claims. In response, Applicants have amended claim 13 to recite that the expendable layer A is readily peelable from the adhesive layer, as supported in specification for example at paragraph [0031].

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment and discussion offered in this Amendment After Final is sufficient to remove the outstanding rejections and place the claims in an allowable condition. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that reconsideration is proper after a Final Rejection because the amendments place the claims in an allowable condition and do not require further examination. With this in mind, Applicants address each of the outstanding rejections below. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned Applicants' representative if that would be helpful to resolving any issues, or if the Examiner would like to propose other claim amendments that could result in an after final allowance.

REJECTION OVER THE KRUEGER REFERENCE (REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(b))

Claims 13-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by the Krueger et al. reference (U.S. Pat. No. 4,552,714). The Office Action states that the claim language of "a two layer co-extruded A-B composite sheet" is interpreted as open-ended and as such reads on a disclosure such as the Krueger reference, which teaches a multiple layer structure containing more than just a polymeric layer A and a thermoplastic adhesive layer B. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and request reconsideration.

Claim 13 as previously amended clearly recites a structure that contains a layer "A" and a layer "B" wherein the composite contains no other layers that would read on disclosures such as the Krueger reference. Attention is respectfully drawn to paragraph 30 of the specification, which states "FIG. 1 illustrates a two-layer A-B composite sheet...". FIG. 1 is reproduced here for convenience.



Clearly FIG. 1 which illustrates a two layer A-B composite sheet of the invention, shows a composite sheet having only layer A and only layer B. Subject to the qualification in paragraph [0038] that a plurality of adhesive sheets can be co-extruded together to build up a thickness, Applicants respectfully submit that the language of claim 13 is not open-ended to the extent that it reads on the structure of the Krueger reference, as asserted in the Office Action. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned Applicants' representative if he has any suggestions of an Examiner's amendment that would further clarify the position.

On the basis of the discussion above, Applicants respectfully request the rejection be withdrawn.

REJECTION OVER THE OHYA REFERENCE

Claims 13 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the Ohya et al. reference (U.S. Pat. No. 4,567,090). The Final Rejection maintains that the Ohya reference anticipates the subject matter of claim 13 because the recitation

of a two layer A-B composite sheet is open ended and can read on multilayer structures disclosed in the reference. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and request reconsideration.

For the same reasons as discussed above with respect to the Krueger reference, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 13 and claim 17 (which depends from claim 13) recite a structure with only layers A and B. As a result, the disclosure of the Ohya reference—which as acknowledged in the Final Rejection, describes an A/B/C/D/C/B/A multilayer composite—does not anticipate the subject matter of claim 13. For this reason, Applicants respectfully request the rejection over the Ohya reference be withdrawn.

REJECTION OVER THE KORPMAN REFERENCE

Claims 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the Korpman reference (U.S. Pat. No. 4,379,806). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and request reconsideration.

The differences between the Korpman reference and the subject matter of the current claims are discussed in Applicants' November 28, 2006 amendment, which is herein incorporated by reference. There, the readily removable nature of the expendable layer recited in the claims was discussed with particular reference to paragraph [0032] in illustrative fashion. The discussion also refers to column 1, lines 51 to 61 of the Korpman reference that explained that in Korpman, the adhesive layer is securely retained on the backing. The November 2006 amendment continued by pointing out that the reference described an interlocking layer between the

thermoplastic layer and the adhesive layer. For all of these reasons, the Korpman reference does not teach an A/B composite wherein the A layer is a readily removable expendable polymeric layer as in the claims.

The rejected claim 13 has been amended to recite that the expendable layer is readily peelable from the adhesive layer. As discussed, this amendment distinguishes the claimed subject matter from the disclosure of the reference. For this reason, Applicants respectfully request the rejection be withdrawn.

REJECTIONS OVER THE KATSUKI REFERENCE

Claims 13, 14, 16-18, 20-23, 25-27, and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over the Katsuki et al. reference (U.S. Pat. No. 4,427,743). As developed in earlier prosecution, the Katsuki reference discloses a five layer composite. For the reasons discussed above, Applicants believe that claims 13 and 22 recite structures that contain two layers and three layers, respectively. Applicants respectfully submit that the Katsuki disclosure of the five-layer composite does not anticipate the subject matter of claims 13 and 22.

Applicants believe that dependent claims 14, 16-18, and 20-21 (depending from claim 13) and dependent claims 23, 25-27, and 30 (depending from claim 22) are patentable because they depend from patentable claims 13 and 22, respectively. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection over the Katsuki reference be withdrawn.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 15, 19, 24, and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over the Katsuki reference in view of the Friedman reference (U.S. Pat. No. 6,159,608). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and respectfully request reconsideration.

The deficiencies of the Katsuki reference as applied to claims 13 and 22 are disclosed above. Applicants respectfully submit that the Friedman reference is not sufficient to remove those deficiencies. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons discussed above, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 13-30 as amended are patentable over the cited references. Applicants believe that their amendments and remarks after final have brought the claims into an allowable condition and consideration of the remarks requires no further examination. As noted above, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if prosecution can be expedited in any way including with any amendments the Examiner wishes to propose. Further and favorable consideration is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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